United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Holy See asks Secretary-General, at request of Iraq, to intercede with Security Council with view to promoting dialogue between Council and Iraq; United Nations spokesman confirms that plane carrying 52 United Nations weapons inspectors landed in Iraq this morning.

+ United States calls for measures to prepare for transition from United States-led forces to United Nations Operation in Somalia, citing "significant progress" toward securing environment for humanitarian relief operations.

+ United Nations appeals for $138.1 million for agencies to aid Afghanistan from January to September.

+ Lebanon asks Security Council for extension of mandate of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which expires on 31 January, for further six-month period.

+ Egyptian Foreign Minister dismisses allegations by Sudan that Egyptian forces are carrying out aggression against Halayib, saying that territory belongs to Egypt both legally and historically.

+ Secretary-General's report on disarmament and arms regulation discussed at Conference on Disarmament.

+ Outgoing President of International Fund for Agricultural Development warns that 20 million more rural people, mostly women, will be trapped in poverty each year, if nothing is done.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has been approached by the Holy See, on behalf of the Iraqi Government, with the request that he intercede with the Security Council with a view to promoting a dialogue between the Council and Iraq. In a statement issued today, the Secretary-General said he had conveyed the request to Security Council members.

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For information media--not an official record

The Secretary-General hopes that the recent decision by Iraq to cease its restrictions on flights of United Nations aircraft carrying Special Commission's inspectors, together with full compliance by Iraq with Security Council resolutions, will decrease tensions in the area, and that the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations will develop in a more positive context.

Meanwhile, a United Nations spokesman confirmed today that a plane carrying 52 United Nations weapons inspectors had landed this morning in Iraq. Another flight was expected for tomorrow.

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The United States has called for measures to prepare for the transition from the United States-led Unified Task Force to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), saying that "significant progress" had been made by the coalision forces in support of the Operation Restore Hope toward securing the environment for humanitarian relief operations in that country.

In a report, dated 16 January, the United States says its officials have already begun initial discussions of this progress with United Nations officials in New York, as well as with the United States Commander of the Unified Task force and United Nations officials in Somalia.

The report says the United States looked forward to "prompt consideration" of a Security Council resolution that will authorize an increase in number of troops for UNOSOM, give it an appropriate mandate, and ensure it is properly equiped to handle that mandate.

There are approximately 21,000 United States military personnel deployed in the Unified Task Force in Somalia. Non-United States forces in the coalision forces total some 10,000 troops.
Document S/25126

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The United Nations today issued a consolidated Appeal asking the international community to provide $138.1 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, devastated by fourteen years of war.

In a statement issued in connection with the appeal, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said "the severe hardships faced by large sections of the Afghan population ... must be of priority concern to the international community". Despite adverse conditions, the statement said, over 1.5 million refugees returned to Afghanistan in 1992, and up to two million were expected to follow during 1993.

The appeal, which covers the period from January to September 1993, focuses on "life-sustaining" actions that include mine clearance, voluntary repatriation assistance, food aid, health facilities, water supply and sanitation aid, as well as emergency agricultural inputs.

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In addition to supporting the return of refugees, programmes included in the appeal aim to meet needs of about 2 million Afghans in the poorest sections of the cities and in rural communities affected by returning refugees and displaced persons. Lack of adequate food, shelter and health facilities, particularly during the harsh winter months, had further exacerbated their ordeal.

The Secretary-General has asked his Personal Representative, Sotirios Mousouris, to coordinate the emergency operation in his capacity as Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, under the overall direction of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson. The coordination of the emergency programmes will be conducted by the newly-formed United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA).

A similar appeal was made in June 1992 for $180 million in emergency assistance for Afghanistan, but only $85 million was received. As a result, the necessary programmes in Afghanistan were in peril, according to a United Nations official today.

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Lebanon has asked the Security Council for an extension of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 January, for a further six-month period.

In a letter, dated 18 January, the Lebanese Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Khalil Makkawi, reports that perfect coordination exists between the command of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army, which UNIFIL is helping to restore its authority in the southern part of the country. However, the letter says, Israel is determined to undermine Lebanese efforts to consolidate national unity and territorial integrity "by perpetuating its brutal occupation of the south".

The letter goes on to say that in spite of protests by the Lebanese Government, Israel has recently uprooted 415 Palestinian civilians from their homes and deported them to Lebanon in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. In that context, it says, the presence of UNIFIL continues to be of utmost necessity to provide much of the needed assistance and international support for the civilian population faced with Israeli occupation.
Document S/25125

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Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa has dismissed allegations by the Sudan that Egyptian forces were carrying out an aggression against the territory of Halayib, saying that Egypt considered the reference made by the Sudan as "unacceptable in both form and substance".

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In a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 14 January, Mr. Moussa said there had "never at any time" been an Egyptian presence in Sudanese territory south of the 22nd parallel, and the claim that "the Halayib area is Sudanese territory rests on no legal, historical or factual basis".

The claims revealed the designs of the Sudan, he wrote, to transform the limited administrative functions entrusted to it by Egypt "into permanent occupation and annexation" of territory that belongs to Egypt both legally and historically.
S/25127

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The present period offered an historic occasion for the globalization of disarmament, the representative of Turkey, Asim Arar, told the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva today, as it discussed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era".

Mr. Arar stated that disarmament could only be justified at the international scale if it was perceived as a means of achieving peace and not as an end in itself. It was also time for the Conference, he said, to recognize the far-reaching changes which had occurred in the world and to adjust its priorities accordingly.

Also today, the Conference continued consultations on its agenda for the 1993 session and discussed other organizational matters. The first part of the Conference's 1993 session began on 19 January and is scheduled to run until 26 March.

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The Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) opened its sixteenth session in Rome yesterday during which it will review IFAD's activities around the world, particularly its efforts to eliminate rural poverty in the developing world.

The President of IFAD, Idriss Jazairy, warned that 20 million more rural people, mostly women, would fall into the poverty trap each remaining year of the decade if present trends were allowed to continue. "We can halt this tragic trend not by handouts, but by helping the poor avoid or climb out of the poverty trap, setting themselves on the path to achieving a lasting improvement in their condition."

Mr. Jazairy, who is due to step down as President of IFAD after serving two four-year terms, said that IFAD is guided by the paradigm that investing in the rural poor "is not only socially desirable but makes good economic sense".

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